GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5321
ANSWERED ON:06.04.2017
Contaminated Drinking Water
Singh Shri Ravneet

Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ground water in certain parts of the country, including in Punjab, is contaminated with toxic chemicals including heavy metals;
(b) if so, whether the Government has plans to initiate any scheme that focuses on supplying piped drinking water in such areas; and
(c) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
(SHRI RAMESH CHANDAPPA JIGAJINAGI)

(a) State-wise number of habitations affected by chemical contamination including heavy metals in rural drinking water sources including Punjab as reported by the States into Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) of the Ministry as on 31th March, 2017 is at Annexure.

(b) & (c) Rural drinking water supply is a state subject. This Ministry supplements the efforts of the States by providing them with technical and financial assistance through the centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) for improving the coverage of safe drinking water to rural population. It is the State Governments who plan, design, execute and operate schemes for providing safe drinking water.
Under NRDWP, States can utilize upto 67% of funds released to them for provision of safe drinking water in water quality affected habitations with priority to arsenic and fluoride affected habitations. States may like to set up community water purification systems as a short/medium term measure for immediate provision of safe drinking water as powers to plan, design, implement and monitor water supply projects including water treatment plants has been delegated to them. Further, 5% of the NRDWP funds are earmarked for Water Quality and allocated to those States with habitations affected by excess chemical contamination and with high priority districts affected by Japanese Encephalitis/Acute Encephalitis Syndrome.
States have been asked to focus on providing piped water supply schemes from safe and perennial surface water source in water quality affected habitations. As immediate measures, States have been provided an amount of Rs. 800 Crores in Mar 2016 (including Haryana) as 100% grant by Government of India on the recommendation of NITI Aayog to provide 8-10 litres per capita per day of safe drinking water in arsenic and fluoride affected habitations for drinking and cooking purposes, as short term measures through Community Water Purification Plants. In addition, funds to the tune of Rs.100 Crore each are also provided for tackling arsenic and fluoride problems in West Bengal and Rajasthan respectively for the last mile connectivity in commissioning surface water based piped water supply schemes.
The Ministry has formulated a National Water Quality Sub-Mission for focussed funding ring fenced only to arsenic and fluoride rural population on 50 : 50 cost sharing basis between centre and state and 90:10 for North-Eastern & Himalayan States preferably through surface water based piped water supply schemes. Under this program, Rs. 814.14 Crore have been released to 15 States to complete ongoing schemes.